COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ORIGINAL PAITHANI & DUPLICATE PAITHANI

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ABSTRACT

India has a rich heritage of textile crafts. Indian textile craft is appreciated globally for its intricate craftsmanship. Also, it plays an important role in employment generation and rural economic development of the country. India has a variety of textile crafts in saris as per state. Paithani sari is one of the oldest art forms of textile weaving art. It flourished in the Paithan town which is located in the state of Maharashtra under the ruler of The Satavahana era in 200BCE. It is a pride of each Maharashtrian woman to have one Paithani in her life. The situation after 2000 years is worst compared to history. Now there are only thousands of original Paithani art weavers working on the handloom. The market is flooded with duplicate Paithani which are manufactured on the machine. It is devastating to the ancient art of Paithani weaving. The data is collected through the Google form questionnaire circulated among sixty women to understand the reason behind the flooded market with duplicate Paithani sari. The analysis shows the lack of knowledge and awareness in buyers. The study concludes that weaver is seeking help for his art to preserve for the generations to come. And if we did not support this art it will be history.

KEYWORDS: Indian Textile Art, Textile Craft, Weavers of India & Problems of Weavers

Original Article

INTRODUCTION

Indian handloom sector is the oldest household industry and it is famous for its excellence and intricate artistic craftsmanship. Over a thousand years the handloom sector has survived because of its advantages of household activities, low capital investment, production flexibility in small quantities, and the possibility to create innovative designs. It has a great potential to generate huge employment in villages so it is proven that the handloom sector is the most efficient employment provider to the artisans of India right after the agriculture sector.

Each state of India has a different identity of handcrafted handloom saris. Paithani art is one of the art forms belonging to Paithan, a small town in the state of Maharashtra. The Paithani sari known as Mahavastra means the richest attire, which is the pride of each woman in Maharashtra to have one Paithani in her wardrobe. The Paithani name is derived from the town named Paithan, this town was also known as Pratisthan in history.

Paithan was ruled by eleven rulers because of its extraordinary and famous art. All the ancient historic evidence proves that many rulers were willing to rule over Paithan as a capital hub of textile. Paithani art truly flourished in the dynasty of the Satavahanas. The dynasty encouraged and boosted the trade of Paithanisari with Greco-Roman countries. During the period of the Satavahanas records were being scripted on the walls of caves. The script has the description of weaving, dyeing, and fine embroidery in the Gatha Sattasai written by a poet of the king Hala in the Satavahana period. Even the roman mathematician Ptolemy wrote that the textiles of Baithana (Paithan) are the finest textile fabric. As well as the Greek traveller Arrian also wrote about the jewellery, beads and fine textiles of Paithan. The roman author Piny wrote that the Paithan was so prosperous that nearly 10 crore

money per annum was paid to import the textiles and jewels of India and the major hub was Paithan.

There are many proofs found in the archaeological findings. The archaeological department found light silk threads and fragments of fabrics in 1966 at Nevasa which is a town near Paithan. The silk fabric has original patterns in the same technique used in Paithani weaving. So the researchers concluded that the Paithani art form is the oldest weaving art which is 2200 years old. Despite the different eleven dynasties ruled over the Paithan. The town preserved the art of Paithani. In the 17th century Peshwa ruled over Paithan and they shifted a few of the weavers to the Yeola town in the Nasik district so slowly Yeola started establishing as a new hub of Paithani weaving art and textile. After a century Paithan was devastated by the Pendharies and Paithan lost its identity as a hub of Paithani art. Today Paithan town has dwindled to only ten to fifteen idle looms. Now Yeola is the manufacturing hub of original Paithani sari in traditional art form. There are around 6000 to 7000 weavers in Yeola and 13000 weavers in the surrounding villages.

TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES

The weaving technique is as similar to other handloom saris in India. The design on the sari border or pallu appears through the interlock non-continuous weft silk or jari thread throughout the weaving of the sari. The process is very intricate and time-consuming so the product becomes so expensive. The sari is woven with pure silk yarns in warp and weft. In ancient times pure gold or pure silver thin wire called jari which is used as a weft thread to inlay the designs on borders and pallu.(**Error! Reference source not found.**) The small bobbins are used to insert as per design and colours. There is no limitation for colours so minimum of 400 to 450 tiny bobbins (**Error! Reference source not found.**)are used for the all-over design sari. Now pure gold or pure silver is replaced by artificial jari but silk is maintained for the entire sari. One intricate design sari took around three to six months to complete. Owing to the total time required the sari become so expensive compared to the power loom sari.

Figure 1: Original Ancient Sari Woven with Pure Jari.

Figure 2: Tiny Bobbins to Inlay Design on Border from the Back Side of Sari.

TRADITIONAL TYPES OF PAITHANI

In the early 17th century the Paithani is woven in cotton and pure silk and pure gold zari were used to inlay the intricate designs on the border or pallu of the Paithani sari. It has two types of borders the Narali border and the Pankhi border. Narali border means the border design is decorated with coconut-shaped designs. The Pankhi border means the border is decorated with feather patterns. The famous traditional motifs on Paithanipallu are known as per locale names of particular fruit, bird, or such objects. The Peacocks are usually used in many designs also Kuyari means mango pattern used in Paithani pallus. The Tota-Maina Paithani means parrot and nightingale motifs woven together on the border, Mor brocade Paithani means peacocks on the all-over border. The Morbangadi Paithani means four peacocks and a bangle pattern on the all-over design on the border of the sari. The Asawali Paithani means the floral geometrical motif on the border and pallu of the Paithani sari. The Ajanta lotus Paithani means the lotus flower inspired by the designs in Ajanta caves used in the border and pallu of the Paithani sari. The Anarvel Paithani means the pomegranate creeper all around the border of the Paithani sari. The Gokarnavel Paithani, the Sadafuli Paithani, and the Hansa-Kamal Paithani show the swan and lotus together on the border and Pallu of the Paithani sari. The Asharphi means the gold coin motif woven on the all-over base of the sari.

Community

The Paithani weaving art is a legacy for the Koshti community. Koshti means weaver who teaches the art to his son and the art is passed on to the next generation. Also, many allied workers play an important role in the craft industry. Paithani weaving will not be complete without allied workers involved in the process. All the processes are divided into different communities. Each community has been an expert through the practice from generation to generation. There are many processes required to complete the art of Paithani. The weaving, yarn Sourcing, dyeing, warping, gold and silver threading, etc. The communities are known as Sali, Koshti, and Momin communities, Bhavsar communities, Sonar communities, Chapade communities, Patva communities, and Tanais communities. The area where they live and work is identified as per their work.

Advantages

The handloom sector is considered a Small Scale Industry (SSI). The handloom sector has a tremendous capacity to generate employment in rural India because of its advantages. It requires minimal requirements to start a small-scale house activity. This sector requires a minimum capital of investment. It can generate employment because India has a surplus and abundant labour availability. It can fulfill the small production quantity requirement so it has a huge capacity to adapt to the market. The sector has a great strength to create new, innovative, and customized designs.

METHODOLOGY

The craft has many advantages still the sector is facing various challenges and issues. The global market capacity is huge for handcrafted products but due to the lack of authenticity of the handmade products customers are being duped by sellers. Despite the rich and dominant history of Paithani weaving, the art of Paithani craft is facing many challenges. It is being declined by a customer against economic power-loomed saris. The Yeola market is having abundant quantities of duplicates of Paithani saris woven on power-loom. Still few weavers and their families are trying to protect the art in its original form. The weavers are facing a livelihood crisis. Primary data is collected through deep interviews with five weavers, five shop owners, and fifty women who buy saris regularly. While the conversation with fifty women I understood the reason behind the duplicate saris in the market. There are 80% of women who do not understand and do not know how to recognize the difference between the original sari. 75% of women purchased duplicate Paithani sari only because of a lack of awareness. And 100% of women wanted to know about the original form of Paithani. While intense research and after talking to a couple of weavers and shop owners those keep such duplicate saris to sell. I identified the major problems of weavers and buyers. I also discussed their thoughts and the solutions upon it. Secondary data is collected through internet articles and youtube videos. Secondary data did not throw much light on why the duplicate market is increasing day by day.

The market is flooded with duplicate power loom Paithani saris. There are many power-loom sari manufacturers imitating peacock motifs by machine embroidery as like original artwork of Paithani and providing in the mass market. The duplicate sari is easy to recognize by checking its backside. As per the below photo, you can see the front side motif is showing continuous thread at the backside of the motif. When you see such continuous thread at the backside of the border or pallu design that means the sari is woven on the machine. (**Error! Reference source not found.**) At the same time, the original sari motif is easy to recognize with the same tact. When we see the motif of the original sari it looks the same on the front side and backside.(**Error! Reference source not found.**) Also, the original sari has few hand knots (**Error! Reference source not found.**) on its backside.

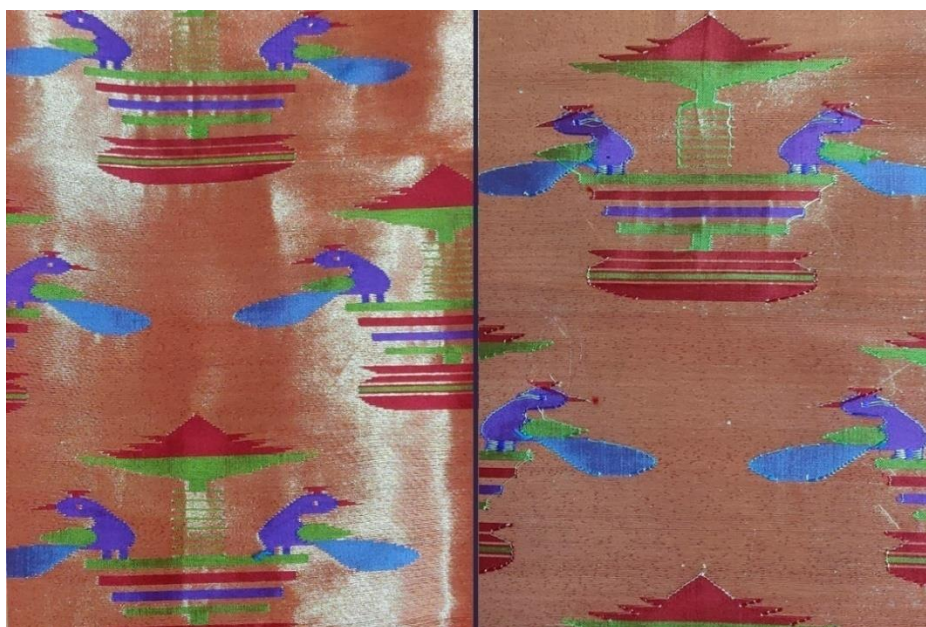**Figure 3: Duplicate Paithani Sari Motif Front Side and Backside.**

Figure 4: Original Paithani Sari Motif Look Same at Front and Back Side.
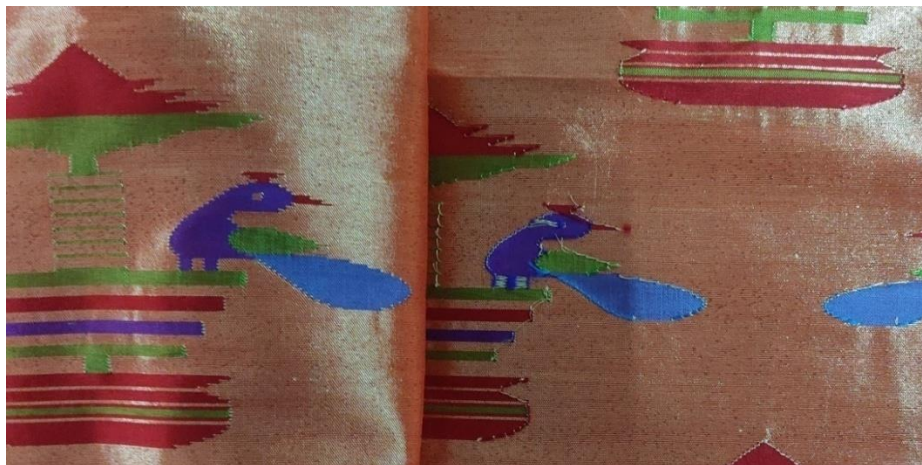
Figure 5: Original Sari Motif has Knots on Back Side.

This mechanized production is a threat to an original art form. Duplicate Paithani sari is manufactured on power-loom so it becomes ready to sell in hours. The original Paithani sari takes around a month for its basic design. Owing to the abundant availability of duplicate Paithani sari shopkeeper purchases them at the very lowest cost competitively and sells them at a high cost like the cost of the original Paithani sari. The seller or shopkeeper does not attach the tag to the sari. He decides the cost of the sari as per the customer's paying capacity. The duplicity is raising difficulties in the retention of the art and conservation of weaving craft. There are thousands of varieties available in the market, manufactured on power-loom and it is being a threat for all weavers and handloom products. The customers are not aware of the original art form. They are unable to identify the difference between handloom and power loom products so the shopkeepers or sellers are duping to sell duplicate sari. The customers are willing to buy the original Paithani sari and are also ready to pay a high cost for it but get a duplicate product. In a customer survey, the reason behind buying such a product is the trust of the shopkeeper and lack of awareness. The customers do not understand the difference between original work and duplicate work. The shopkeepers keep original saris and duplicate saris in the stock. But they do not describe to the customers about duplicate saris and they sell them at the high cost as the original Paithani sari.

Paithani is the oldest art form of weaving carrying a legacy of the ancient history of 2200 years. Despite the excellent qualities, original Paithani weavers are facing so many challenges against duplicate Paithani for the last few years. The weavers are migrating to other occupations due to the abundant availability of duplication. The study will throw the light upon problems and can give possible suggestions which will benefit the weaver. It will also aware customer about the original art form of Paithani. It is really important for now to preserve the art in its original form. It has a rich heritage and legacy to patronage for generations to come.

CONCLUSIONS

In ancient history, India was exporting an amazing variety of Paithani made of silk and cotton. Paithani is a sari with an intricate hand-woven inlay work with pure silk thread. The art has survived thousands of weavers located in Paithan and Yeola. Now the winds are blowing against the traditional art of Paithani. It is killing the original art form and destroying the artisans. There are thousands of varieties available in the market, manufactured on power-loom at the lowest manufacturing cost so the market is flooded with duplicate Paithani saris. The weaver is facing so many problems because of the duplicity of their art in a single day. It seems like there is no value for history and traditional art. Customers are

getting cheated even if they wanted to buy original art forms they get duplicate sari only because they are not educated in a particular area. It is very easy to understand the difference between the original and duplicate sari which was shown in the above photos. This study will help people to recognize the pure handloom product very easily and they can pay for the original and right product and will benefit to right artisan instead of the middle man. The Central Government should release the dissemination of public information about handloom products. The small awareness videos will help to get educated about the originality of the product. The Textile ministry should launch an authentic platform to sell original products through such sites which will benefit both, weavers and customers. It will help to build the trust between customer and weaver. Ultimately efforts for the real cause will turn into hope.

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